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AUTHOR Cohen, Libby
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ABSTRACT

Special education staff development activities in Maine are listed, and ways to serve Maine's rural areas are described. Long range goals in Maine's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (as required by P.L. 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act) are listed for collaboration, needs assessment, resource/data collection, pesonnel training/staff development, and evaluation/documentation. Appended are brief descriptions of major training activities during 1980-81. (CL)

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STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREAS

Purpose

The purpose of this presentation is to provide an update of staff development activities in Maine.

MAINE PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

An Overview

Public Law 94-142, The Education of the Handicapped Act has become the driving force behind personnel development. It requires each state to develop and implement a comprehensive system of personnel development (CSPD). The scope is broad; the intent is to insure that all personnel involved in the education of exceptional children are qualified.

RURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MAINE

Maine has a population density of 270 persons per square mile (in comparison to 600 - plus persons per square mile in Massachusetts and Connecticut), has only one major four-lane highway, an average annual snowfall of 60-110 inches, and averages 50 days of sub-zero temperatures. Over half of the total population of just 1,000,000 persons lives in the bottom third of the state. These characteristics required the development of a unique approach to personnel development.

CSPD.....What Is It?

Maine's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development, or CSPD, is a long-range plan to promote the ongoing professional development of all school and other personnel involved in the education of handicapped children.

Maine's CSPD has been in the process of development and definitio

over the past two years. A CSPD Advisory Committee was formed in November, 1978; a statewide CSPD awareness conference was held in May, 1979; a coordinator for CSPD was hired in October, 1979; a Part D proposal supporting Maine's CSPD and Integrated Inservice Delivery System was written and submitted to BEH (The Bureau for the Educationally Hanidcapped) in October, 1979; and a CSPD plan formulated and documented in January, 1980. Throughout this time, planned efforts at disseminating information about CSPD were made through written and verbal presentations.

The following are the components of Maine CSPD:

(1) Coordination and identification of information sources.

(2) Dissemination and access to information about these sources.

(3) Development of support teams.

(4) Design and delivery of specific in-service or professional development programs.

(5) Identification of staff development needs.

The following are the long-range objectives of Maine CSPD:

Long Range Objectives

1.0 Collaboration

Varying institutions/groups involved in the education of handicapped children will be actively involved in the development, implementation, and annual updating of all components of Maine's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development.

Activities:

1. Teams composed of staff from local and state educational agencies and from institutions of higher education assisted school districts in the development of local staff development systems.

2. Input and involvement of support service providers (i.e., physical therapists, speech and language clinicians, mental health workers etc.) were solicited and involved with CSPD activities.

3. A symposium on staff development was held.

2.0 Needs Assessment

A multifaceted system identifying personnel training needs will be designed, refined and implemented.

Activities:

1. An instrument designed to assess personnel needs was designed and distributed.

2. Data was collected relative to personnel training needs.

3.0 Resource/Data Collection

An information service that provides for easy access by Maine educators to national, state and local computerized information bases will be developed and operationalized.

Activities:

1. Information about special education resources, including special education programs, gifted and talented programs, preschool programs, will be gathered and entered in a computerized information base.

2. Individuals representing various organizations and agencies throughout the state will be trained in data collection.

4.0 Dissemination

Information about Maine's CSPD and existing resources will be disseminated within and outside of Maine.

Activities:

1. Presentations at local, state and national conferences were made.
2. The information service was publicized and promoted.
3. Resource listings of "Hot Topics" of particular concern or interest were written and disseminated.
4. Information about existing resources were provided through the Information Exchange.

5.0 Personnel Training/Staff Development

Pre and Inservice training programs and systems relative to the education of persons involved in the education of exceptional children will be designed, implemented and evaluated.

Activities:

1. Inservice staff development programs responsive to specific identified state needs were designed and conducted.
2. Regional training programs on school improvement were conducted.

6.0 Evaluation/Documentation

A system incorporating both summative and formative means of evaluation and documentation was designed, refined and utilized.

Activities:

1. The existing evaluation/documentation system was reviewed and refined.
2. A summative progress report describing the outcome of CSPD objectives will be written and disseminated (Spring, 1982).

Appendix A explains some of the major training activities that have occurred during the 1980-81 year. The University of Southern Maine has been attempting to meet some of the staff development needs by training special education personnel to develop and deliver these inservice programs in Maine.

Appendix A

Secondary P.E.T. Management (Pupil Evaluation Team)

The Secondary P.E.T. Management program is designed to assist school systems in developing a more effective and efficient secondary P.E.T. process. P.E.T. representatives from participating school districts will be involved in assessing their present P.E.T. operations, preparing for a P.E.T. meeting, and sharpening P.E.T. skills including assessment and writing of goals and objectives.

PROJECT STRETCH (Strategies for Training Regular Educators to Teach Children With Handicaps)

Maine Project STRETCH uses a pre-published video tape and manual series (from Hubbard, Inc.), together with a three part Seminar Leaders Training program to teach public school teachers to train their peers in managing handicapped children in the classroom.

The local program, held in individual LEA's, consists of a video tape lesson broadcast over Educational Television and a 1½ hour seminar with 10 to 15 participants.

Administrator's Seminar on Special Education

The administrator's Seminar on Special Education is designed to increase administrator's knowledge of special education laws and program options, models for assessing needs, programs to meet needs and available resources. Teams composed of administrators and teachers, regular and special educators from participating districts identify needs, establish goals and develop an action plan to reach these goals.

CSRS (Child Services Review System)

Child Services Review System (CSRS) is a quality assurance process designed to measure, document, and improve the quality of special education in procedures and outcomes. Using a retrospective peer review process, special educators conducting a CSRS audit develop individualized standards of quality service, and review pupil records according to consensus standards. The purpose of CSRS is to assess the quality of past services with a commitment to improve similar services in the future, if the assessment indicates a need.

Staff Development System Design (A)

The purpose of this program is to develop locally designed staff development systems to promote school and staff growth.

Through the program district planning teams composed of teachers and administrators, regular and special educators, are familiarized with research on school improvement and staff development and are assisted in: 1) assessing district and staff needs, 2) identifying resources, 3) designing programs

to respond to needs, 4) designing a management structure to ensure that needs continue to be identified and addressed, 5) and evaluating both the programs and the overall support system, Assistance/information on group process and communication skills is also provided.

Staff Development System Design (B)

A program on staff development system design will also be held for school, state and university staff who are interested in assisting school districts in the development of local staff development systems. The purpose of the program is to familiarize participants with content and processes integral to designing staff development systems. Information including the following will be reviewed and applied in the program:

- current research on school improvement and effective and ineffective staff development practices
- process consultation
- needs assessment processes and instruments
- resources available in and out of Maine
- inservice program design
- evaluation process/instruments
- communication and group process skills/instruments
- system design

Early Childhood

Plans for 1981-82 are to continue the Project NETWORK contract with Maine Children's Resource Center of the University of Southern Maine, continuing to provide on-going inservice as well as university courses in the area of early childhood special education. The Early Childhood Consultant will continue to be available to school districts to provide workshops in the area of pre-K screening, early assessment, child development, and Child Find requirements under P.L. 94-142.

A Very Special Arts Festival Program

The Very Special Arts Festival program is designed to provide a non-competitive forum for disabled and non-disabled children, youth and adults to celebrate and share their accomplishments in the visual and performing arts. A major goal of the program is to provide arts related training and technical assistance to those agencies and/or individuals who currently or potentially can provide services to the handicapped individual.

Over 30 artists who have been involved in the program since its inception in 1978 are available to offer inservice workshop and training sessions to elementary and secondary teachers to explore the ways in which the arts can be integrated into the lives of special needs individuals.

Collaborative planning is essential to the success of staff development. With regard to CSPD, this means that all personnel, regular and special education, be involved in planning. The design of a needs assessment device is complex and requires the imput from many constituencies, including teachers, administrators, support personnel and parents.

Training can take a variety of forms and should not be limited to "one-shot" presentations. The planner must be able to choose activities that meet the identified needs. Activities should be sequential and take into consideration the needs of adult learners. (See Appendix B)

The adoption process can be thought of as a sequence of growth for the individual and the institution. But this does not mean that the same activity cannot be used to develop both. Collaborative planning brings the process full circle. Collaborative planning and assessing needs begins again.